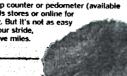
for your health

10,000 simple steps to fitness

Taking 10,000 steps a day will deliver health benefits, says

laking 10,000 steps a day will deliver nearm benefits, says the Cooper Institute, a health research and education center near Dallas. Just clip on a step counter or pedometer (available at discount and sporting goods stores or online for \$10 and up) and start moving. But it's not as easy as it sounds: Depending on your stride, 10,000 steps equals four to five miles.





Abandoned dogs teach troubled kids to care

By Scott Craven

on Moran knew his part well. Holding the dog treat to his chest, the 14-year-old looked into the eyes of his dog, Ruby, a diminu-tive sheltie mix whose world just a month ago was a 3- by 5-foot kennel in an animal

Ruby knew her part, too, nd watched Jon intently as he lowered the treat and coaxed her into the down

As the audience in the as the audience in the school cafeteria applauded the small feat, Ruby licking his hands for crumbs, it suddenly occurred to Jon: The one trick he had yet to learn was how to say goodbye.

Learning to care

Joh knew from the day he was handed Ruby's leash that he would play a small part in her life. At the end of the monthlong Teaching Love and Compassion pro-gram at Mesa's Taylor Jun-ior High, Jon and his partner, Jeremy Page, would hand Ruby to her new owner, or, if a home could not be found, she'd go back

to the shelter.
But the inevitable parting was too far away to be a concern. There was much excitement as the 12 stu-



Above: Ruby eyes a freat;
Jon Moran, 14, eyes Ruby,
Right: John Kline, 13, receives some unconditional
love from Kandi. The boys
participated in Teaching
Love and Compassion,
a program in which kids learn
to care for dogs while also
learning about themselves.

azcentral.com

rw a slide show of the dogs

INSIDE: A TV show inspired the program in Mesa. E3.

dents chosen to participate met the six homeless dogs they would train. With luck, each animal would have a family to go to when the program concluded at the end of April.

Schools and Maricopa County Animal Care and Control, also would benefit the students, each of whom faced emotional, psycholog-ical and social challenges. Students would find out how to care for another liv-ing thing while learning a little bit about themselves.

The pro-ram, conducted intly by Mesa Public

And this April morning, as the program culminated with a graduation ceremo-ny, students let go of the

Many were too lost in the moment to remember the encouraging words of their teacher Pat Policastro: "Sometimes do ing something good hurts, and the more good it does, the more it can hurt."

leash for the last

It was the second time the program was offered to students in Policastro's class for emotionally disa-bled students.

Her class was chosen because Policastro, in addition to having 18 years of experience with special-needs kids, often brought one of her pet Dobermans to class

See LESSONS Page 1:3

TONY (formerly

dig for gold in hush-hus gathering

southwest gardens

By Jaimee Rose

Ozzy Oshourne's ring w

in town this week, but you not supposed to know. Those million-dollar Sto Weitzman diamond sands! everyone coned over at the Oscars dropped in for a hi hush visit, too.

Deep in the recesses of Valley hotel ballroom this week — at a location so se cret that we've been gage



terrots Williams/The Artesna Riversion and diamond with

was a secret meeting of tworld's most chichi jewe designers, armed with millions of dollars in the est diamonds and gemeter Officially, they were here unveil their new collection to select retailers, but un cially, this was see-and-b seen at its finest: air-kiss: name-dropping, "who are wearing?" galore.

The Classic Couture Je

lery Collection & Conference was invitation only, which

means: Don't tell. (Yes, the spell jewelry with two I's Harry Winston was her and Fabergé, too. Miss Europe Isabel Darras strategies.) about in a little black dre and diamonds. Fashion eators from Vogue and Allucombed the scene. (Free sages courtesy of Allure in the break room. Looking diamonds is such hard we Women wore \$40,000 nec-laces with tank tops and

Everyone huzzed about the new things: Coral is the new turquoise. And jewel that does double duty, like \$2.5 million 150-karat dia mond tiara that is also a

necklace.
"There's only a few tin you can show up wearing same tiara," said a secret resentative from Louis G & Company, which made piece. She was kidding, bot really

not really.

There was lots of talk about stars, but designer the stars Henry Dunay is telling who has his coral bracelet. Until you see a wearing it in a magazine

says, "you shut your mon Discretion is everythin

New homes for program's lucky canines

BORES (formerly Bubba), Is a 5- or 6-year-old male Rottweller-spaniel mix. He'd been neutered and partially trained, indicating he once had an owner. Boris was adopted by his foster family.

RUBY (formerly Queenle), a female sheltle mix estimat to be 6 years old. She'd beet transferred from another shelter and had suffered a slight wound on her muz perhaps from a doglight. was adopted by her foste

KANDI is a 1- or 2-year-old male Welsh corgi mix. He was picked up as a stray and some training was evident. Kandi was adopted by an elderly Mesa couple.

CHANCE is a 2-year-old male Rottweiler-mastiff He'd been turned in by

BOND (formerly Radar). is a 2- or 3-year-old male sheep dog-terrier mix. Owners brought him to the shelter when they could no longer care for him. Bond was adopted















You should be nice to dogs, but you should be nice to people too. A dog is scared if you're yelling, but a person can be hurt more because he can also understand what you're saying.

> Wes Jefferles Student dog handler

Kids say goodbye, but get to keep new compassion

LESSONS from E1

to help relate to the students. The dog was allowed to roam freely, connecting with the youths on a level no person

n. "I always want the kids to "I always want the kids to be greeted by someone who is happy they're there," Poli-castro said. "And there are some days I just can't do that. But my Dobie is right there, welcoming them and licking their hands."

The right dog

Gary DiGeronimo knew what to look for while search ing for six dogs suitable for the TLC program at Taylor.

DiGeronimo, an animal be Differentiation, an animal behaviorist contracted to help run the program with Julie Bank, director of public programs for Animal Care and Control, roamed the aisles of Control, roamed the aisles of the county's Pet Adoption center looking for candidates. Each dog had to be healthy and work well with others. Simply put, the kind of ani-mal prompting him to say, "It can't believe someone gave up on this dog." Within a few hours he had his selections, ronging from

his selections, ranging from the calm and easygoing Ruby to rough-and-tumble Chance, a Rottweiler mastiff mix who was quite happy to lean his 80-pound frame against the nearest set of legs and who was, DiGeronino summed up, "one big galoot of a

dog."
For the next 20 school days, these dogs would work an hour a day with a dozen kids molded over the years by life's imperfections, perhaps difficult home lives, or verbal and emotional abuse, or even chemical imbalances in the brain.

in the brain.

After each training session, the dogs would be put back in their crates (to be picked up by their foster parents at the end of the school day) and the students would talk about how to treat animals as well as people.

as people.
"You should be nice to
dogs, but you should be nice
to people too," said Wes Jefferies, 13, after a lesson on how a harsh tone of voice affects animals and people the same way. "A dog is scared if you're yelling, but a person can be hurt more because he can also understand what you're saying

No one in the program as-sumed that four weeks of dog training could turn around these kids' lives. But it was believed it could turn them in a new direction, leading to a ripple effect that might touch their lives for years.

Good things were clearly evident the first time the program was offered at Taylor in late 2001, when 12 kids shared an experience they

would not soon forget.
"I've been working with
these kinds of kids for 18 years, and I've never seen a program impact them as much as this class with dogs," Policastro said. "The kids unthe animals to calm them be-

the animals to calm them be-fore training began.
The quiet time had the same effect on the students.
Walking into Policastro's room during first hour, a visi-tor would have found it hard to believe some of these kids are prone to threats or vio-lence, that others suffer uncontrollable outbursts that make them unsuitable class

Jon lay quietly next to Ruby, stroking the sheltie

Ruby, stroking the sheitse around her neck and chest. "Good dog, good Ruby," he cooed as the dog wagged her tail slowly in appreciation. Ruby's deep brown eyes stare into Jon's, neither dog

nor boy knowing how much they had in common.

Ruby was turned in to the Maricopa County animal shel-ter for reasons that were never recorded by the emloyees. Somehow, someone ould no longer live with this entle dog. Jon certs





"I don't like that somebody just kicked her out on the streets," he said. "She's so calm and nice. I'd keep her

Jon, too, was trying to find his place in the world. As a child in Nebraska, his parents gave him to his grandmother to raise because they didn't have the means to support him. He still lives with his grandmother, rarely seeing his mom and dad, who remain

Jon is prone to emotional and, at times, violent out-bursts. One reason, said special education teacher Teri Schulte, whom Jon sees for half the day, is his "issues with abandonment."

But just two weeks into the TLC program, Schulte said she saw wonderful improvements in Jon's behavior. Schulte said Jon was more focused on his work and not so easily frustrated. She added that Jon, who loved to talk about his cat, Sam. had suddenly become a dog

"He has to work through his demons and emotions," Schulte said. "He's struggled when he's had to work with other kids, but I can tell he's

One example was clear at

Top: Kandi, a Welsh-corgi mix, watches student handler John Kline for a command as the dogs are presented to their adoptive families.

Above: Jon Moran, 14, give: Above: Jon Moran, 14, gives Ruby, a sheltie mix, a scratch behind the ears. After caring for the dogs for a month, students must say goodbye.

Right: Andy Thatcher, 12, greets Bond, a sheep dog-

His behavior has improved at home as well. The first words out of Jon's mouth when he arrived home each day usually had something to do with Ruby, said Josephine

Moran, his grandmother.
"You would have thought he spent the whole day with the dog instead of just an hour," Moran said. "He just loved seeing her.

Lessons learned

TLC's impact cannot be measured with grades or test scores. The tools typically sed to gauge success in school do not apply to a pro-gram that is the first of its kind in Maricopa County.

That was why, nearing the end of the four weeks, teachers look for the small

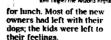
There was Andy, 14, who would not raise his head to answer questions and vet

answer questions and yet spoke to an audience of nearly 50 people to tell them about his dog.

There was 'Tyler, 13, who had spoken of abusing animals and by the program's end had befriended the family yet at the bed once to program of the program's end had befriended the family what the had once to program of the progr ly dog that had once run from

There was Ryen, 14, a tough kid who refused to let on to his feelings until he said a tearful goodbye to Kandi, a friendly Welsh corgi who gladly licked away the tears.

And there was Jon, who took from the program not awareness of compassion and that you can let go of



. In their hearts, they knew they had done the right thing.

Two students walked their dog (to them, it would always be "their dog") to the parking lot, then waved goodbye as the dog hopped into the adoptive couple's car, a leap as practiced as if she'd been do-

ing it all her life.

A few others returned to Policastro's classroom where class assignments would soon await them. And a few sat quietly, sifting through feelings that four weeks ago they'd not believed could exist

Jon, having finished his piece of the celebratory cake and having said goodbye to

Pet therapy program inspired by TV show

By Scott Craven

People who say there is nothing good on TV will ha an argument from Elaine

A TV show featuring the py dogs prompted Miner to look into the possibilities of having dogs work with at-kids in the Mesa School Ditrict. The result was Teach Love and Compassion, a pri gram pairing homeless do with emotionally troubled students to benefit both. Miner, the school board's

president, was inspired by a
HBO special featuring the

Usually a school district will ... choose the least expensive program Not this time. It was obvious they wanted it done right.

Julie Bank Maricopa County Animal Care and Control

Delta Society, which promot and sponsors the use of ani

mals for therapy and servic Miner was so impressed with the positive effect do had on everyone from trou bled kids to hospital patien that she instructed staff members to look into bring

ing such a program to the Mesa school district. Julie Bank of Maricopa County Animal Care and (trol, who was contacted by the district, suggested sev eral possibilities varying is cost and time commitment District officials approved the TLC program, the one that demanded the most

money and effort.
"I was surprised," Bank said. "Usually a school dis trict will look for the easy way out and choose the lea expensive program. Not the time. It was obvious they

wanted it done right."

Miner initially wanted th program to target students risk of dropping out, thinki the dogs would serve as m vation to attend class. She changed her mind shortly ter hearing about Taylor Joint High teacher Pat Police tro, who was already using dogs successfully to reach her emotionally challenge students

"Pat seemed the perfect match," she said. "You nec lot of patience and determ tion to work with dogs or cial-needs kids. I'm not su the program could get off good start without he

Miner would like to see TLC continue for at least other year in Policastro's classroom, doing at least a other two sessions of the monthlong program befor its future is assessed. If Theremains as successful as it